

Paths to Empowerment: A Spotlight on TRUe Global Learning

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Highlighting how the "lightbulb" moments from a culturally integrative process may assist in the development of students to become community minded and globally conscious through empowerment and experiential learning.



Dhulikhel Hospital staff & students, 2025

01. Introduction

TRU's first international collaboration was with the Dhulikhel Hospital in Nepal and the 3rd year nursing students from TRU school of Nursing. This ran from 2000-2003 and allowed for reciprocal exchange of Nepali nurses and TRU students. The collaboration was re-initiated in 2023, led by faculty, Shari Caputo, who participated in the first exchange in 2000 as a BScN student and the latest exchange was this spring in 2025 when Shari Caputo and Amber Archibald returned to Nepal with 8 students. This placement has provided many learning opportunities through experiential learning and specifically, BScN students' lightbulb moments of understanding of the theory and practice with in the global context.

02. Goals

Our goals are as outlined below:

- 1) Highlight how experiential learning through cultural integration assists in the development of students to become community minded and globally conscious through empowerment.
- 2) Illustrate the importance of continuing with collaborative field schools to maintain a presence on the global stage and to promote excellence in future nursing.

Related literature

- 1) Maakrun, J., & Kearney, S. (2020). An intercultural immersion: Personal, professional, and cultural expectations of student participants. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 8(1), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.37333/001c.18721>
- 2) Simpson, S.D.; Jakubec, S.L.; Zawaduk, C. & Lyall, C. (2015) Integrating Global Citizenship through Local Teaching Practices. *Quality Advancement in Nursing Education - Avancées en formation infirmière*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17483/2368-6669.1031>
- 3) Sloand, E. & Bower, K. & Groves, S. (2008). Challenges and Benefits of International Clinical Placements in Public Health Nursing. *Nurse educator*. 33. 35-8. 10.1097/01.NNE.0000299493.00249.2d.

03. Process

Students have the opportunity to apply for an international field school to Nepal for their 3rd year placement. The successful 8 students attend at least four pre trip seminars covering topics such as cultural norms and risk management. Then the students and a faculty member head across the world to Nepal. The students spend 4 weeks in the Dhulikhel hospital growing their nursing skills, building professional relationships, attending cultural events, and seeing historical sites. Faculty work with the staff at the hospital to organize the learning experiences for the students and continue to foster relationship for the sustainability of the field school. Debriefs as a group are frequently done to hear how the students are learning and growing. Students are also asked to present to the next year to aid in the sustainability of the practicum. And from here, they take their new found skills with them into practice. The lightbulb moments and experiential learning were collected through faculty observation and student sharing in clinical debriefs.

Placement opportunities

- ER
- ICU/Peds
- Outreach
- Community

04. LightBulb Moments

- 1) Innovation with limited resources:
 - Working with minimal supplies
 - Creation of garbage bins from newspaper
- 2) Environmental advocates:
 - Plastic clean up campaign.
 - Role models for community awareness, participation, and capacity.
 - Empowerment through action.
- 3) Navigating different health care systems
 - Costs for procedures
 - Awareness of the impact on families/communities
 - Techniques to reduce cost through appropriate and self restricted use of supplies.
- 4) Cultural Health Promotion Practices
 - Learning Cultural Norms
 - Familial importance
 - role in decisions/education

EMPOWERMENT!! STUDENTS
NAVIGATED HEALTH CARE IN A
DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT AND
CULTURE

05. Discussion

This immersive placement helped students to engage in the Nepalese culture in the community and in the hospital, while also empowering them through skill development to traverse a unique culture. Within culture, the students learned to navigate a health care system with both private and government coverage were family's frequently paid for services. For instance, in order for a client to have diagnostic screening to determine if surgery was possible, student's learned that the cost of the MRI was equivalent to the family's home. With this in mind, students were diligent about not wasting or using supplies that were not absolutely necessary. This was linked to the student's lightbulb moments of being innovative with the supplies at hand, needing to use supplies appropriately, and to limit waste. In the community, students had the opportunity to join a plastic clean up campaign. In this role, community members noticed the students and asked why and what they were doing. This made students aware of how they can be role models and advocate for waste mitigation. Another learning moment was in the nurses approach in the community to health promotion education. In Canada, health promotion is often done through informational pamphlets and key educational tips. In Nepal, the students noted that the nurses went into the homes and taught families about healthy foods by cooking it with the family with the ingredients in the home. This approach showed students the importance of family involvement and how nurses could build capacity and health promotion within the community. It also made the students see the value of this type of education and wish to adapt this practice in Canada. Overall, this field school helped the students to gain skills around cultural safety, navigating a new health care system, skills on waste mitigation, and empowerment through advocacy for change.



Hunting for plastic in Dhulikhel



Plastic collected in one hour



Plastic reduction team

06. Conclusion

Although there are challenges working across and in new cultures, students who have the opportunity to practice nursing abroad come back with a new lens on nursing. This experience expands students cultural awareness, innovation in health care, waste management and health promotion strategies. Providing students with skills for working within multicultural communities. Canada and Kamloops itself have a diverse range of cultures within and these skills are invaluable for promoting health and well being, not only globally, but here at home. Overall, international placements are known to help promote cultural safety and sensitivity in students which they can take forward into their nursing practice at home and globally (1,2,3). This placement continues to be a prime example.



Student and faculty group 2025. Celebrating Nurses week



TRADITIONAL ATTIRE FOR DANCE

SHARI C, ROSHANI SHRESTHA (NEPALESE NURSE/GUIDE), AMBER A

MOMO COOK OFF- COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION